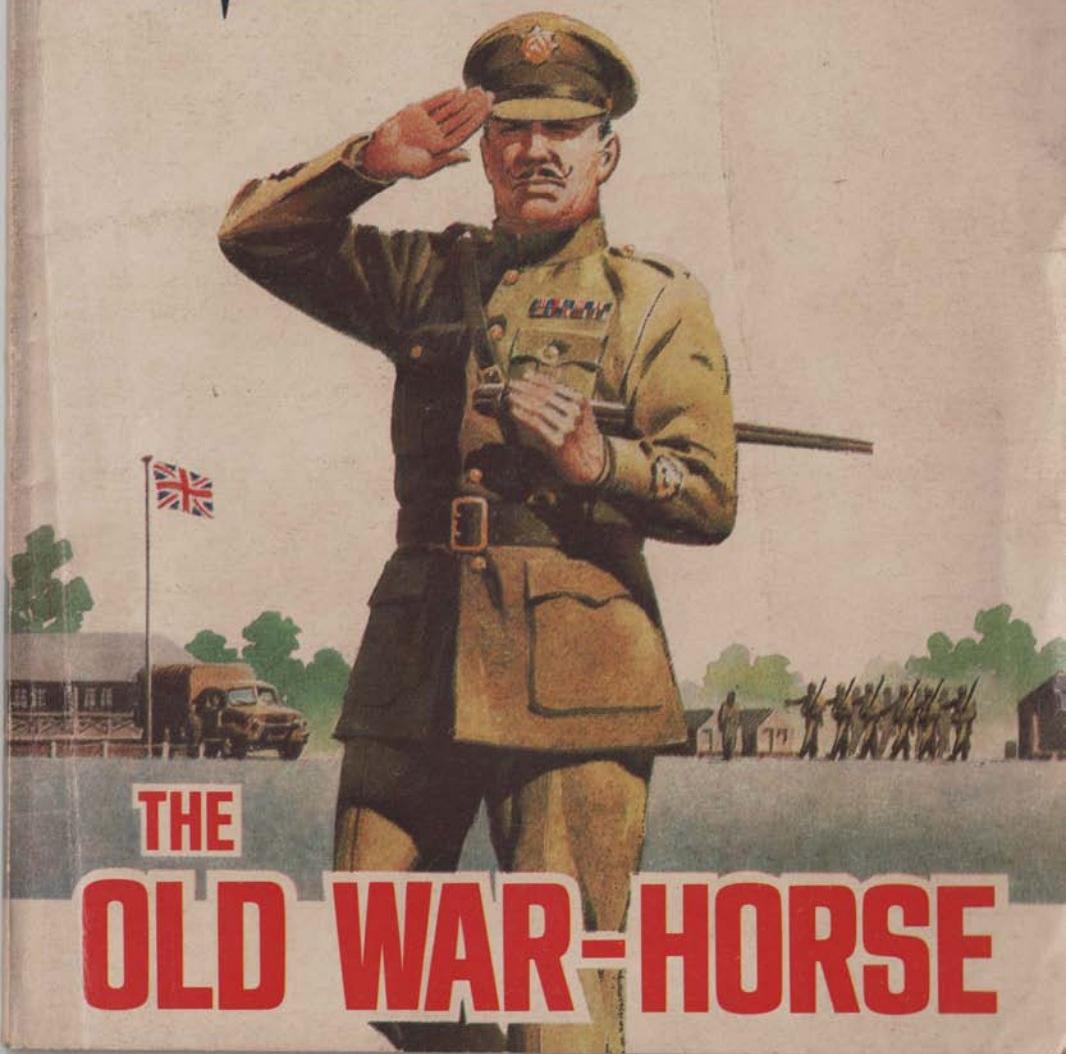


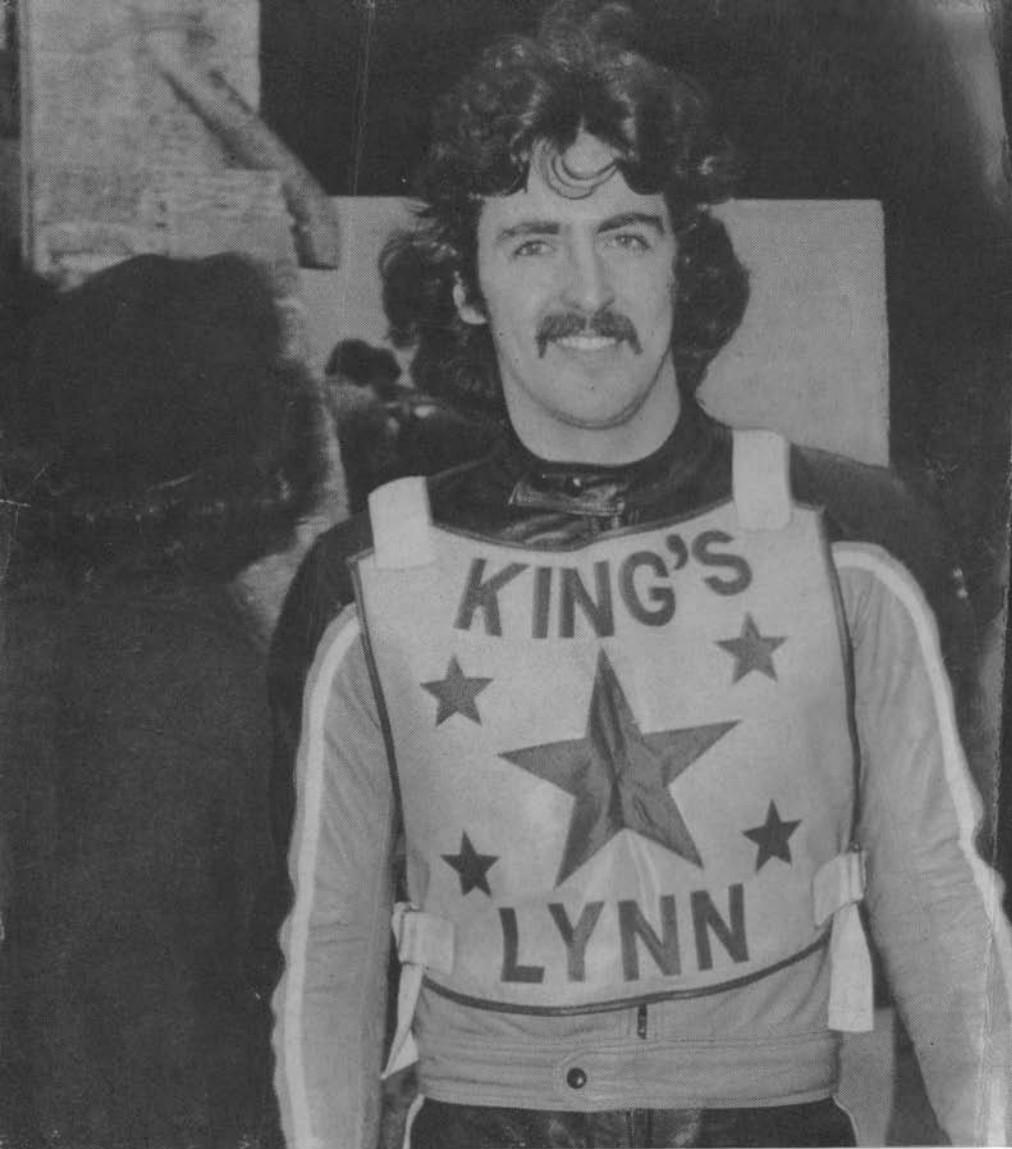
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WAR STORIES IN PICTURES



THE
OLD WAR-HORSE



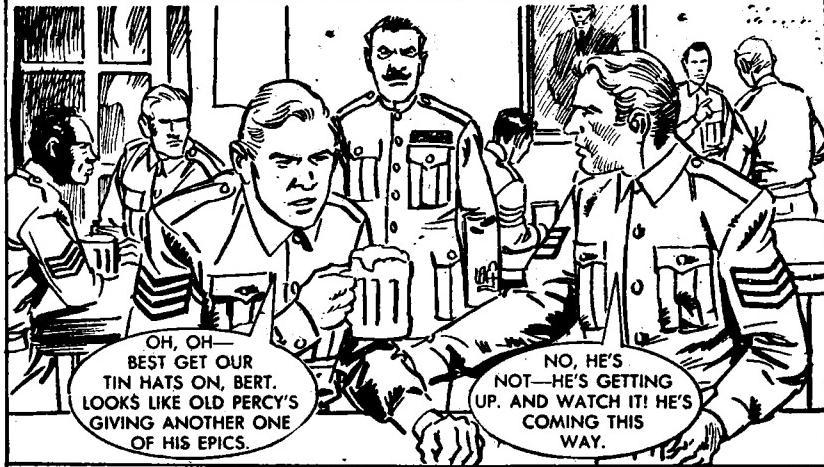
Motor-Cycle Stars – Paul Tyrer

The OLD WAR-HORSE

1940 —THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE WERE CAUGHT IN THAT PERIOD KNOWN AS THE "PHONEY WAR" WHEN IT SEEMED NOTHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. AND FOR REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR PERCY LANSDALE, M.M., STATIONED WITH HIS REGIMENT, THIS SITTING ABOUT WAS PROVING DIFFICULT TO BEAR. PERCY WAS A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER, TRAINED TO FIGHT. HE'D SERVED WITH DISTINCTION ON THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER OF INDIA AND FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR ONE. NOW HE WAS JUST ITCHING TO GET BACK INTO THE THICK OF IT . . .

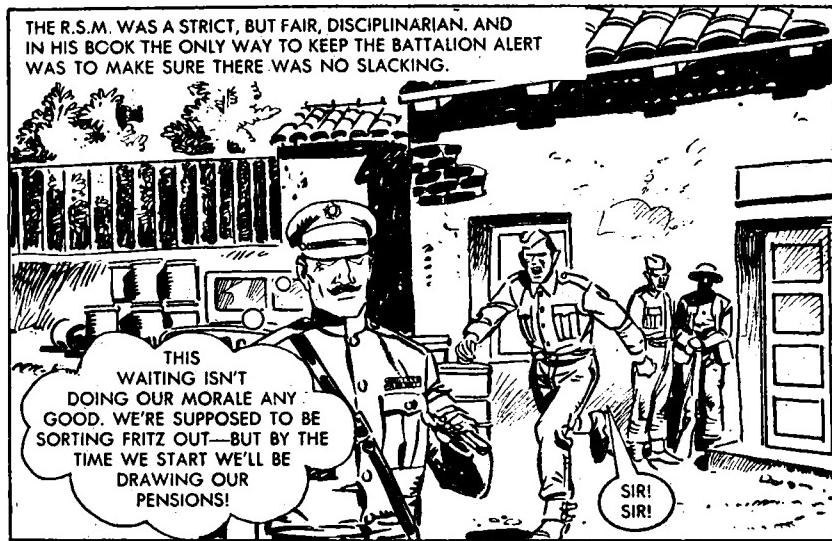


THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT THE GERMANS DIDN'T SEEM TO SHARE PERCY'S ENTHUSIASM FOR ACTION. SO THE R.S.M. FOUGHT THE BOREDOM BY TELLING STORIES OF HIS PAST EXPLOITS TO ANYONE WHO HAD THE TIME TO LISTEN.



AS PERCY STRODE OUT OF THE MESS HE EYED THE TWO SERGEANTS.





AS THE CLERK SPOKE PERCY FELT A SURGE OF EXCITEMENT—PERHAPS THIS WAS IT.



BUT HIS HOPES WERE SOON TO BE SHATTERED.



FOR A MOMENT PERCY WAS PUZZLED. THEN, WHEN THE C.O. BEGAN TO EXPLAIN, HE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EARS.



THE C.O. FELT THAT PERCY WAS TOO SET IN HIS WAYS FOR THIS NEW WAR. WHAT THE REGIMENT NEEDED WAS SOME NEW BLOOD IN THE SENIOR RANKS. PERCY, OF COURSE, THOUGHT OTHERWISE . . .



HIDING HIS ANGER AND DISAPPOINTMENT, PERCY STAMPED TO ATTENTION AS THE C.O. OUTLINED THE DETAILS.

I'VE ALREADY MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR REPLACEMENT, SERGEANT-MAJOR, SO PACK YOUR KIT AND BE READY TO MOVE AS SOON AS YOUR POSTING IS CONFIRMED.



WORD QUICKLY SPREAD THROUGH THE BATTALION. AND THERE WERE SO MANY WHO WERE PLEASED THAT THE R.S.M.'S IRON GRIP WAS SOON TO BE RELINQUISHED.

I HEAR THEY'RE PUTTING THE OLD WAR-HORSE OUT TO GRASS.

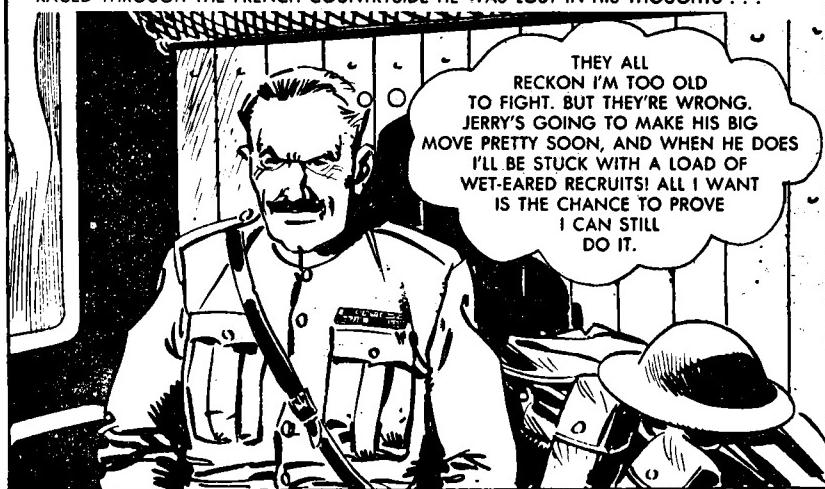
YEAH, HE'S GOING BACK TO BLIGHTY TO NURSE A LOAD OF RECRUITS—LUCKY BEGGARI!



PERCY HAD OVERHEARD EVERY WORD. AND THE REFERENCE TO THE 'OLD WAR-HORSE' WAS THE LAST STRAW.



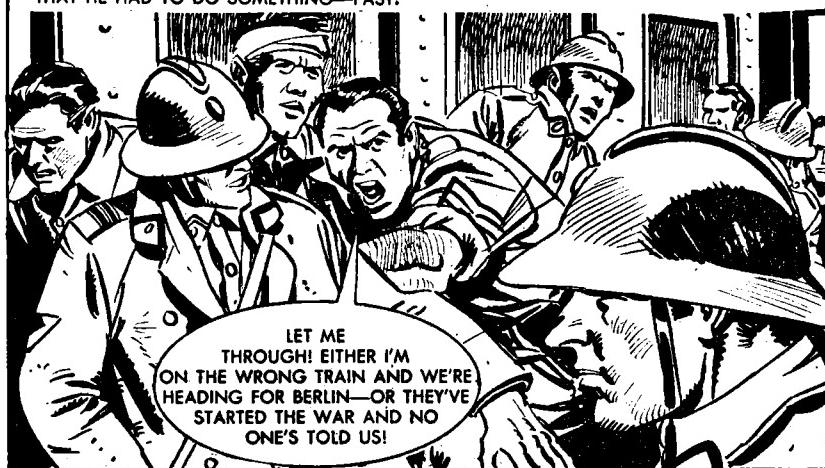
THREE WEEKS LATER PERCY WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO ENGLAND. AND AS THE TRAIN RACED THROUGH THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE HE WAS LOST IN HIS THOUGHTS . . .



BUT THAT CHANCE WAS TO COME FAR SOONER THAN PERCY HAD IMAGINED. AT THAT VERY MOMENT THE WAR FINALLY ARRIVED, RIGHT IN HIS LAP, AS THE TRAIN SQUEELED TO A HALT—UNDER THE GUNS OF A FORWARD NAZI UNIT.



PERCY WASN'T THE ONLY BRITISH SOLDIER ON THE TRAIN. THERE WAS ONE OTHER—CORPORAL 'JACKO' JACKSON. AND JACKO WAS QUICK-WITTED ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT HE HAD TO DO SOMETHING—FAST.



MEANWHILE PERCY WAS ABOUT TO INVESTIGATE WHEN HE BUMPED INTO JACKO. THE CORPORAL BREATHLESSLY EXPLAINED WHAT WAS HAPPENING.

THERE'S JERRY ARMoured CARS OUT THERE, SIR! I RECKON THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SOLDIERS. THERE'S A LOAD OF FRENCHIES GOING ON LEAVE BACK THERE—I WAS WITH 'EM . . .



ALL RIGHT, CORPORAL, KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON. THIS IS NO TIME FOR HYSTERICS. AND GET YOUR RIFLE, LAD . . .

THIS WAS WHAT PERCY HAD BEEN WAITING FOR, AND THERE WAS A GLEAM IN HIS EYES AS HE LOOKED AT JACKO'S RIFLE.

I HOPE THAT THING'S LOADED, CORPORAL. WE'RE GOING TO NEED IT.

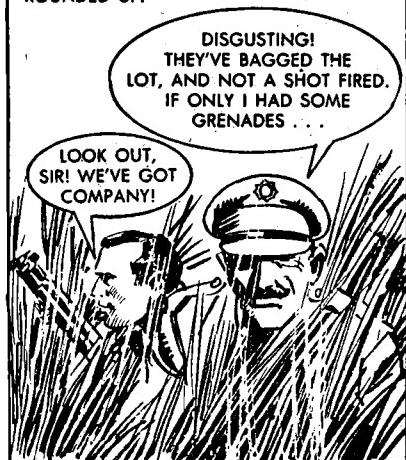
FAT LOT OF GOOD IT'LL DO US, SIR. I RECKON WE'LL NEED AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE TO GET OUT OF THIS.



AS THEY SNEAKED OFF THE TRAIN, PERCY REALISED THAT THE ENEMY MUST HAVE LAUNCHED A SURPRISE ATTACK AND BROKEN THROUGH—AND THESE GERMANS WERE A FORWARD COLUMN.

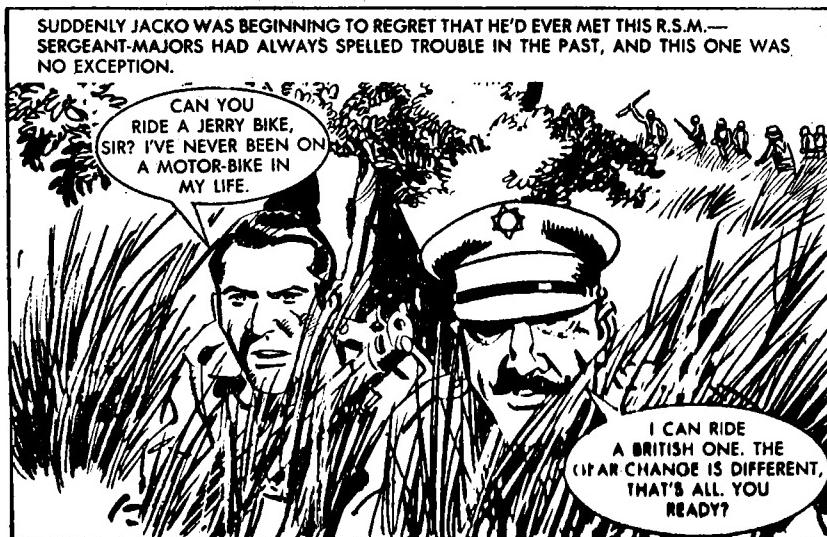


TAKING COVER IN THE LONG GRASS, THEY WATCHED THE FRENCH SOLDIERS BEING ROUNDED UP.



JACKO'S WARNING CAME NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON. QUICKLY HE AND PERCY CRAWLED AWAY . . .



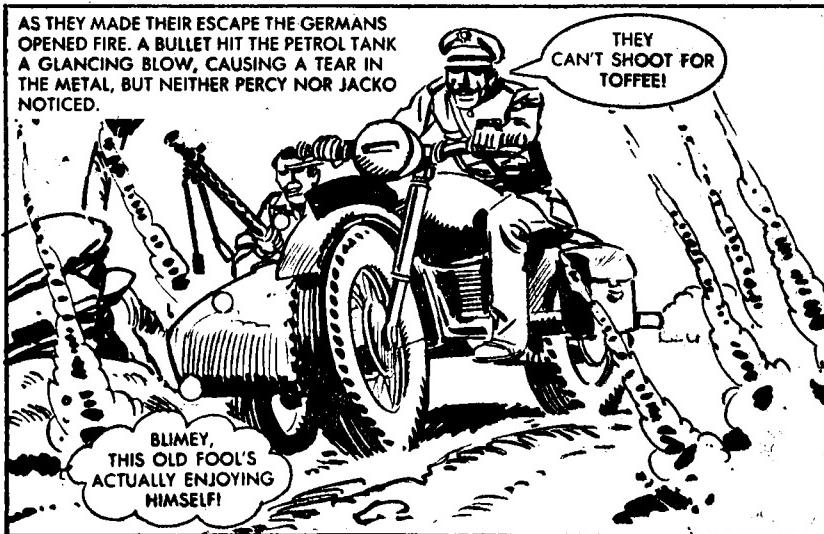


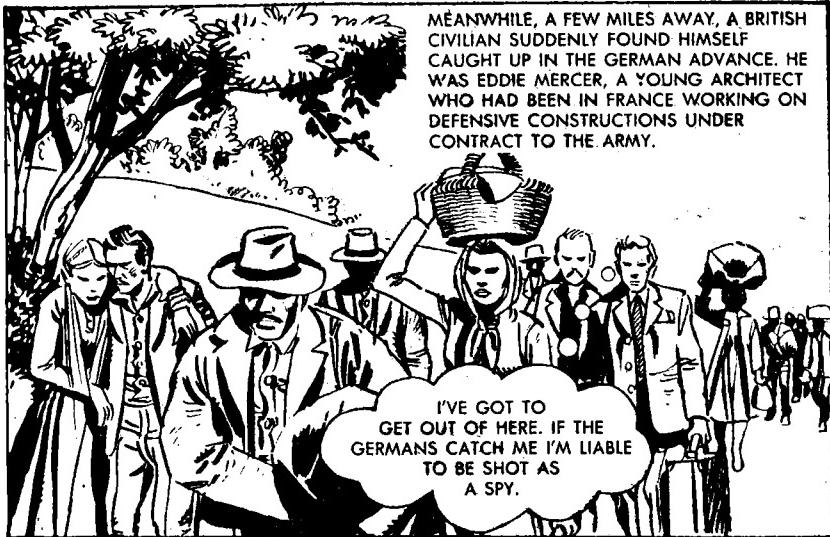
THE TWO GERMANS WERE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.



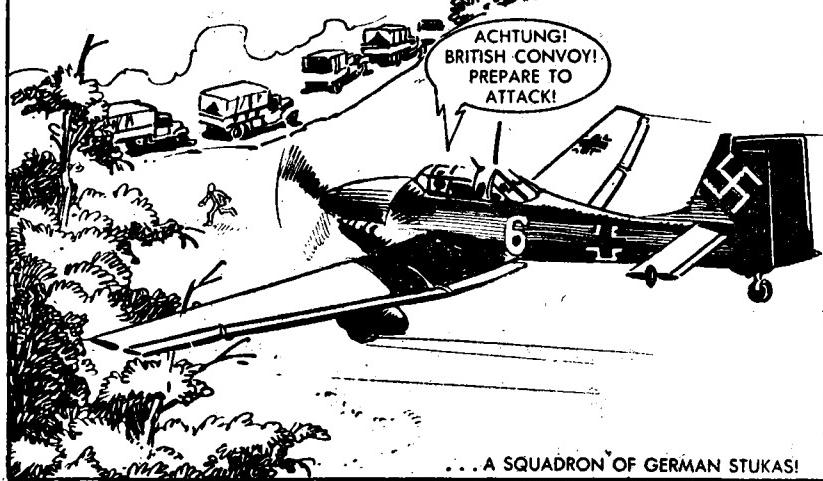
THE TWO GERMANS WERE SOON DEALT WITH—AT THE COST OF JACKO'S RIFLE.



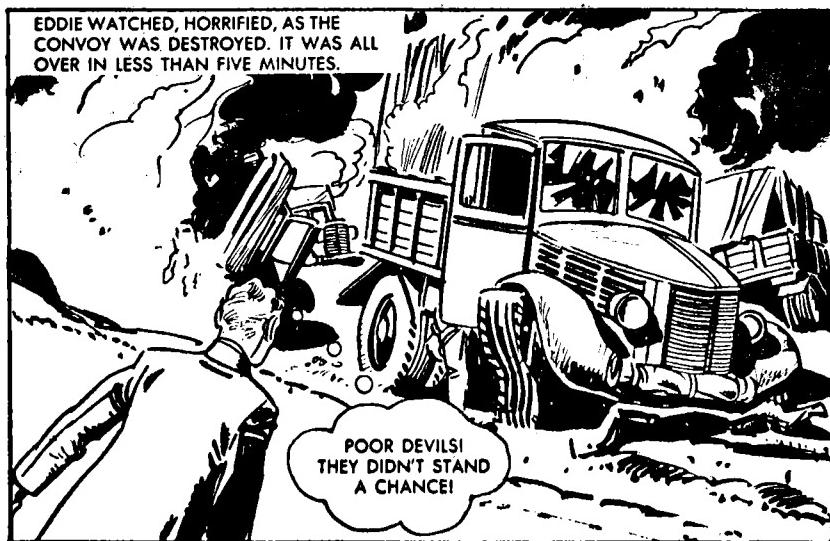


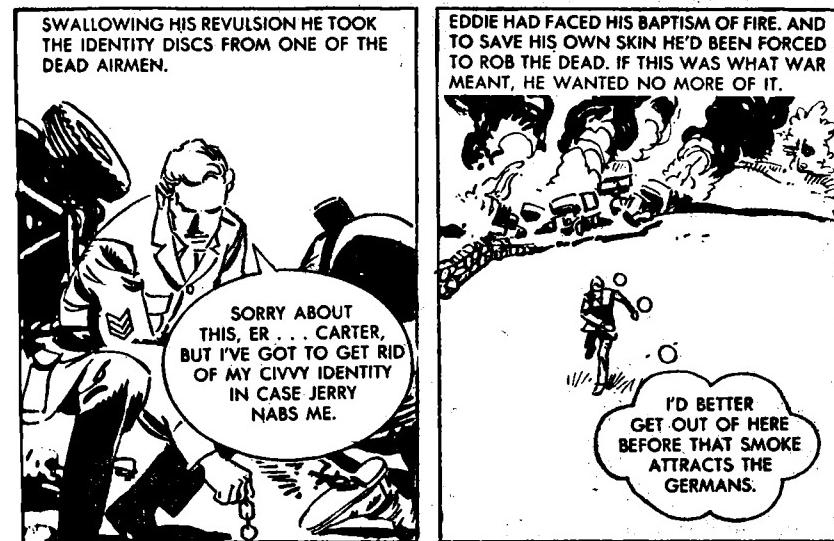
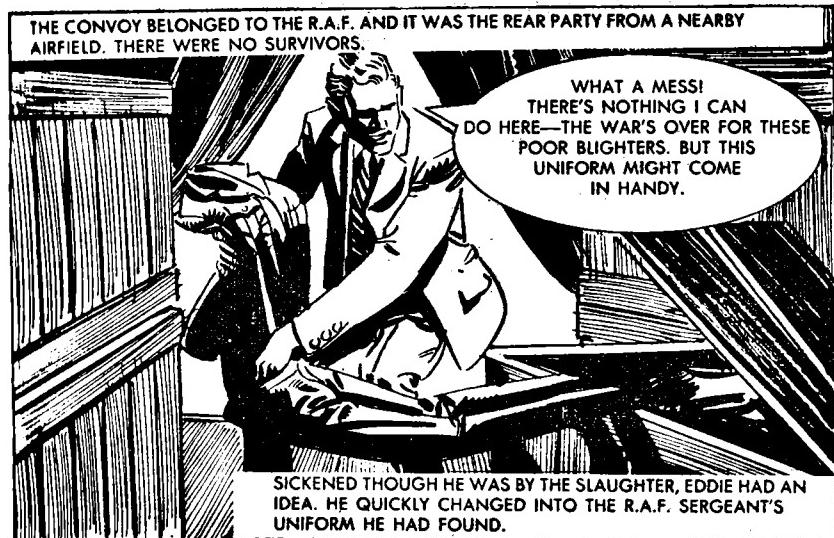


BUT THE CONVOY HAD ALSO BEEN SEEN BY OTHER EYES . . .



EDDIE WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS THE CONVOY WAS DESTROYED. IT WAS ALL OVER IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES.





HE HADN'T GONE FAR WHEN HE RAN INTO A GROUP OF BRITISH SOLDIERS. JUMPY AND APPREHENSIVE, THEY RAISED THEIR RIFLES . . .



THE SOLDIERS SEEMED PLEASED TO HEAR A BRITISH VOICE. LIKE EDDIE, THEY TOO HAD BEEN CUT OFF BY THE GERMAN ADVANCE.

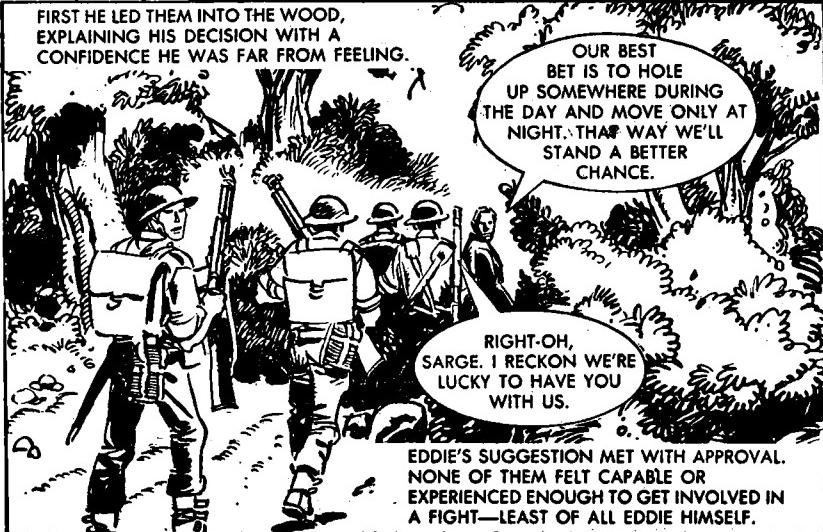


EDDIE KNEW THEY WERE LOOKING TO HIM FOR LEADERSHIP—ONLY HE DIDN'T FEEL CAPABLE OF HELPING THEM. IF HE TOLD THEM WHO HE REALLY WAS AND THEY GOT CAUGHT, IT MIGHT SLIP OUT. SO HE DECIDED TO PLAY ALONG AND PRETEND HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. HE TOOK A DEEP BREATH—



OK, THEN,
YOU CAN STICK
WITH ME.

FIRST HE LED THEM INTO THE WOOD,
EXPLAINING HIS DECISION WITH A
CONFIDENCE HE WAS FAR FROM FEELING.

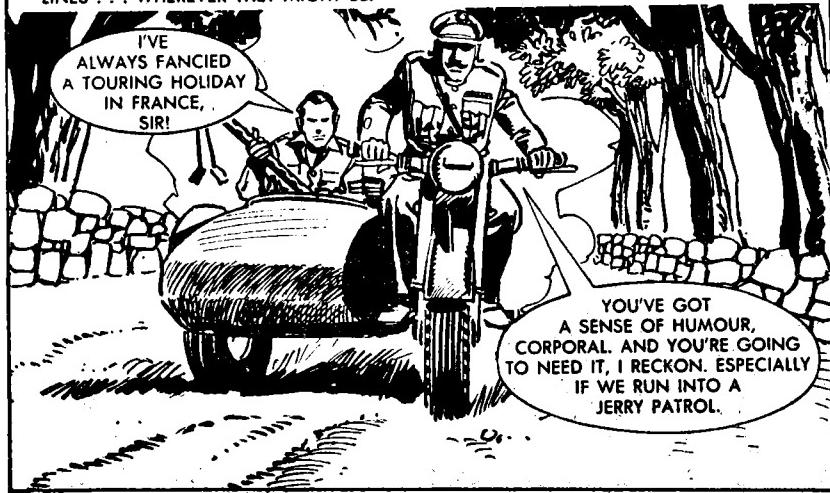


OUR BEST
BET IS TO HOLE
UP SOMEWHERE DURING
THE DAY AND MOVE ONLY AT
NIGHT. THAT WAY WE'LL
STAND A BETTER
CHANCE.

RIGHT-OH,
SARGE. I RECKON WE'RE
LUCKY TO HAVE YOU
WITH US.

EDDIE'S SUGGESTION MET WITH APPROVAL.
NONE OF THEM FELT CAPABLE OR
EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO GET INVOLVED IN
A FIGHT—LEAST OF ALL EDDIE HIMSELF.

MEANWHILE PERCY AND JACKO WERE ALSO MAKING THEIR WAY BACK TO THE BRITISH LINES . . . WHEREVER THEY MIGHT BE.

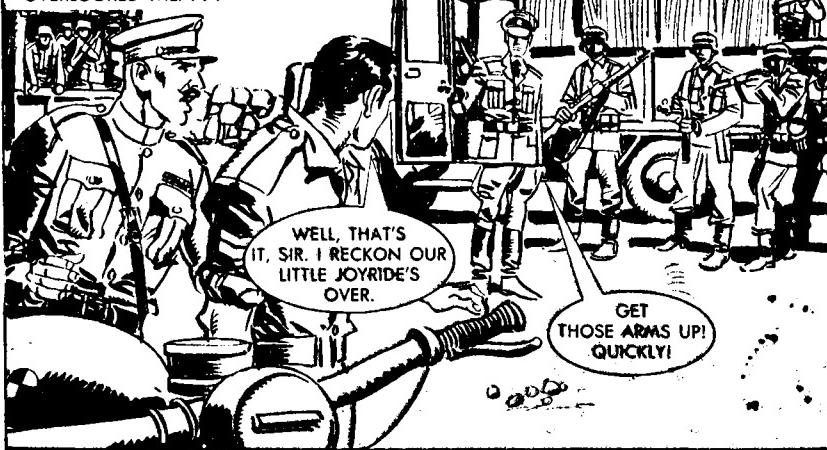


NO SOONER HAD THE R.S.M. SPOKEN THAN THEY RAN STRAIGHT INTO BIG TROUBLE. A GERMAN CONVOY WAS USING THE SAME ROAD.





A SUDDEN CLICK OF RIFLE BOLTS MADE THEM TURN. IN THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT THEY'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE GERMANS. THE GERMANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HADN'T OVERLOOKED THEM . . .



THAT NIGHT PERCY AND JACKO ARRIVED AT A SMALL VILLAGE SCHOOL. IT HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A P.O.W. CAMP—HASTILY, IT SEEMED. AND THE R.S.M. WASN'T IMPRESSED.



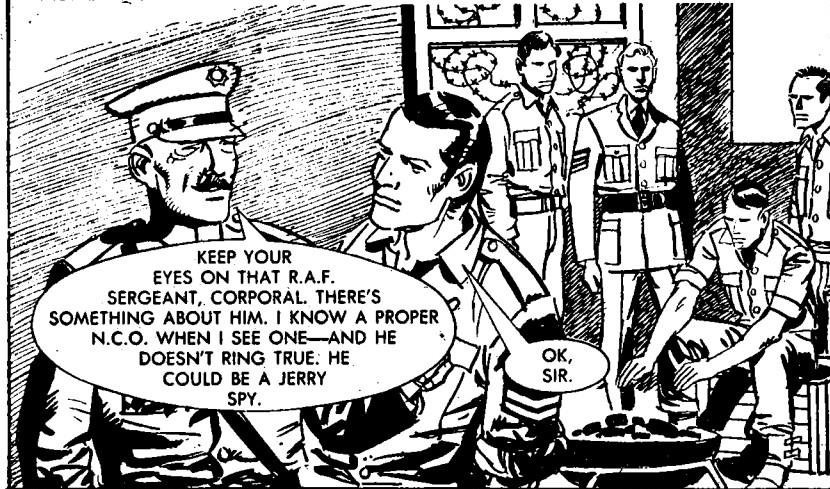
PERCY AND JACKO WERE TAKEN TO ONE OF THE CLASSROOMS WHICH SERVED AS A CELL AND ROUGHLY THRUST INSIDE.



A DEJECTED EDDIE EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED . . .



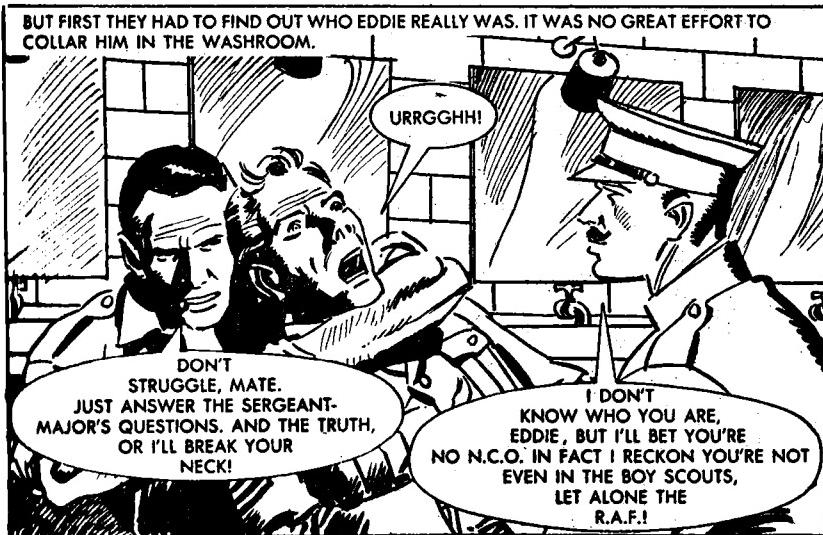
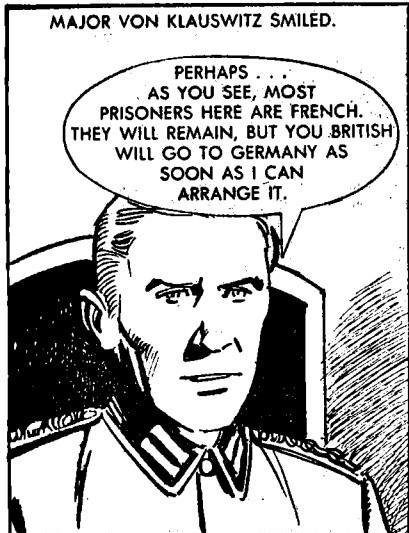
THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT EDDIE THAT AROUSED THE R.S.M.'S SUSPICIONS. HE MUTTERED SWIFTLY TO JACKO AS THEY LOOKED FOR BED-SPACES.

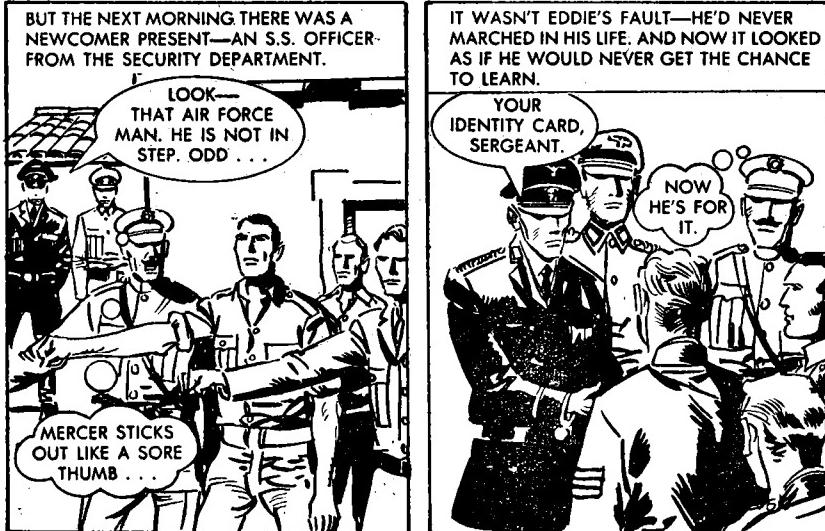
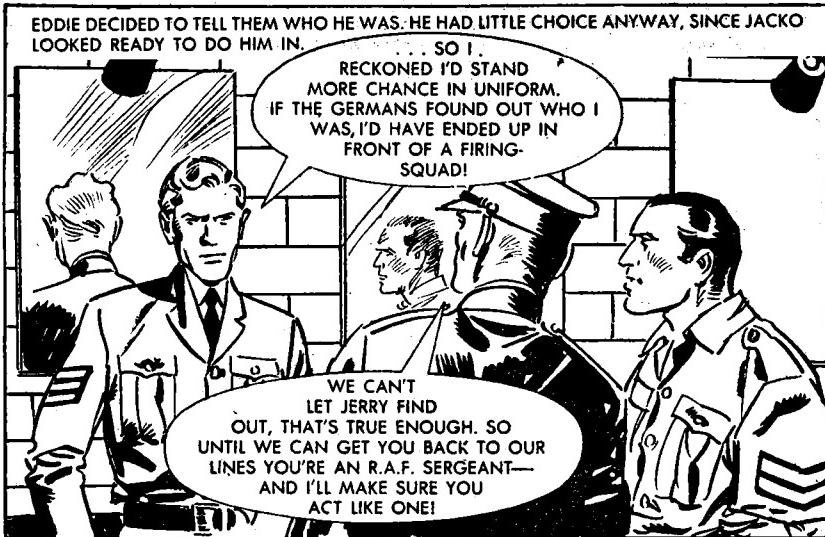


THE NEXT MORNING PERCY AND JACKO WERE TAKEN TO SEE THE COMMANDANT:

I AM MAJOR VON KLAUSWITZ, COMMANDANT OF THIS CAMP. I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOUR EXPLOITS AND I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON A VERY BRAVE EFFORT.







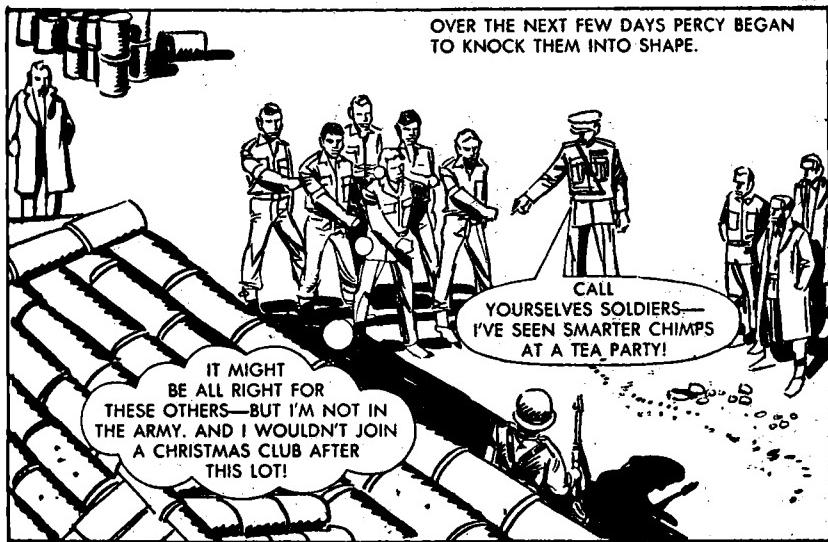


MAJOR VON KLAUSWITZ WAS SATISFIED. HE WAS A PRUSSIAN WHO UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR IRON DISCIPLINE—AND HE HAD NO LOVE FOR THE AIR FORCE. BUT THE S.S. OFFICER WAS NOT SO HAPPY. HE WATCHED THOUGHTFULLY AS PERCY MARCHED HIS MEN AWAY.



EDDIE REALISED THAT HE WAS IN FOR A CRASH COURSE IN MILITARY TRAINING. IT MIGHT SAVE HIS LIFE—BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN HE HAD TO LIKE IT. JACKO WAS SCEPTICAL, TOO.



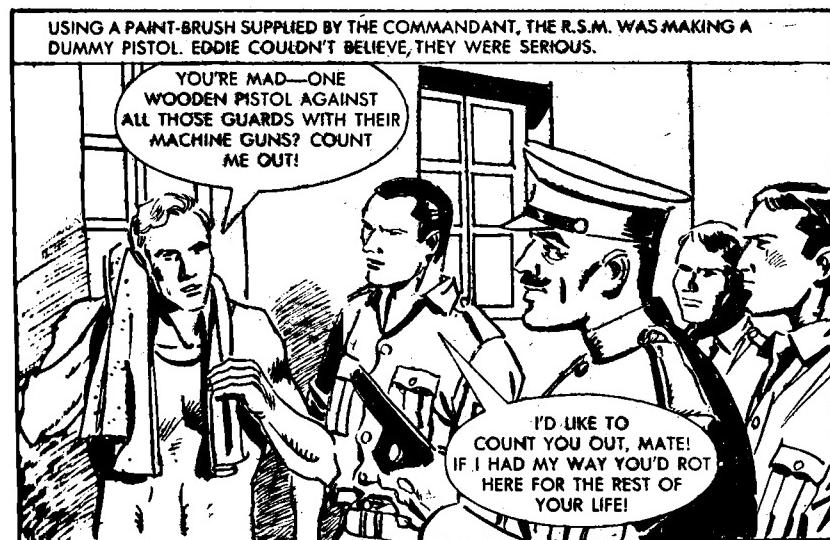
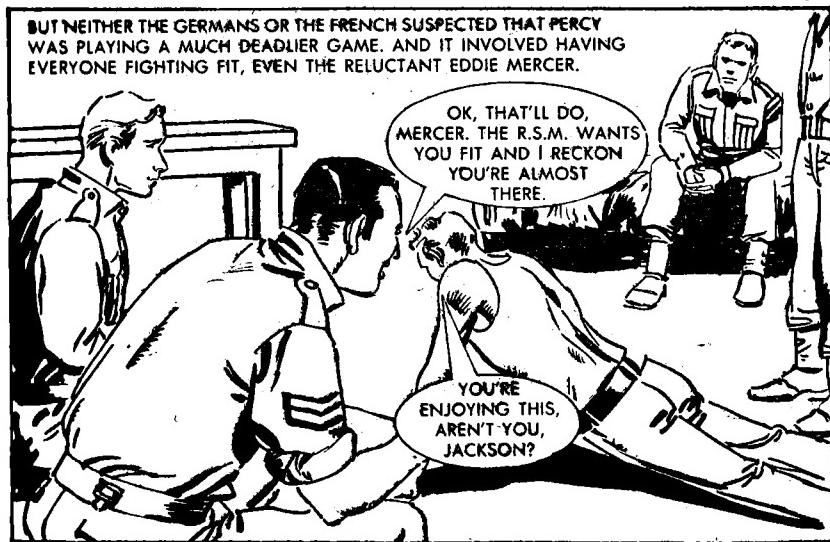


TO MAJOR VON KLAUSWITZ THE R.S.M. POSED NO THREAT. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY MORE INTERESTED IN SPIT AND POLISH THAN IN TRYING TO ESCAPE.



SOON THE SCHOOL BEGAN TO GLEAM WITH FRESH PAINT, MUCH TO THE AMUSEMENT OF THE FRENCH PRISONERS.





THEY WOULD HAVE COME TO BLOWS IF PERCY HADN'T STEPPED IN, HIS VOICE SHAKING WITH RAGE.

BREAK IT
UP! MERCER—YOU'RE
GOING TO DO AS YOU'RE
TOLD FOR A CHANGE.
GET IT?

I'VE
GOT IT. JUST
KEEP HIM OFF
ME.

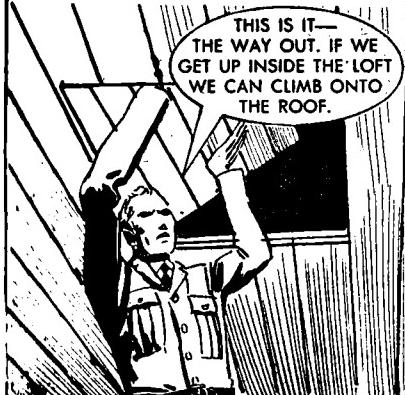
TEMPERS SLOWLY COOLED DOWN AS
PERCY EXPLAINED WHAT THEY WERE
GOING TO DO.

JERRY'S MOVING
US OUT ANY DAY NOW. SO
WE'VE GOT TO ACT FAST. YOU'RE
AN ARCHITECT, MERCER. IS
THERE ANY WAY OUT
OF THIS ROOM?

ON FAMILIAR GROUND, EDDIE
SPOKE CONFIDENTLY.

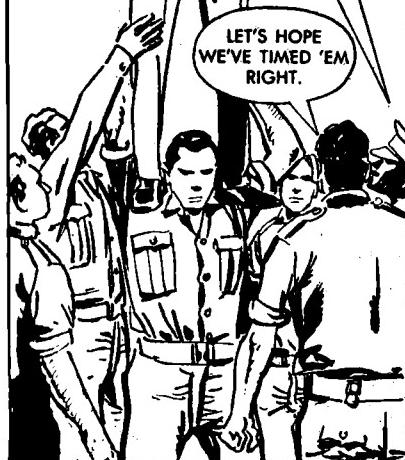
SHOULDN'T
BE DIFFICULT. THIS
IS A SCHOOL, NOT A PRISON
CAMP. AND IT'S AN OLD
BUILDING.

EDDIE WAS RIGHT. THE BUILDING THEY WERE IN HADN'T BEEN INTENDED TO KEEP PEOPLE INSIDE. AS NIGHT FELL, HE FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR.



RIGHT, YOU LOT. UP WE GO BEFORE THE GUARDS DO THEIR NEXT BED CHECK.

LET'S HOPE WE'VE TIMED 'EM RIGHT.

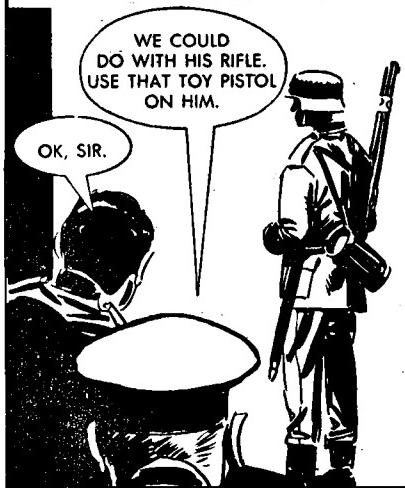


IT DIDN'T TAKE THEM LONG TO GET ON THE ROOF AFTER PERCY HAD MADE THEM BLACK THEIR FACES WITH SOOT FROM THE STOVE.



DON'T WORRY, SIR. THIS TIME WE'LL MAKE IT.

SAFELY ON THE GROUND ONCE MORE,
THEY SPOTTED A LONE GERMAN SENTRY.

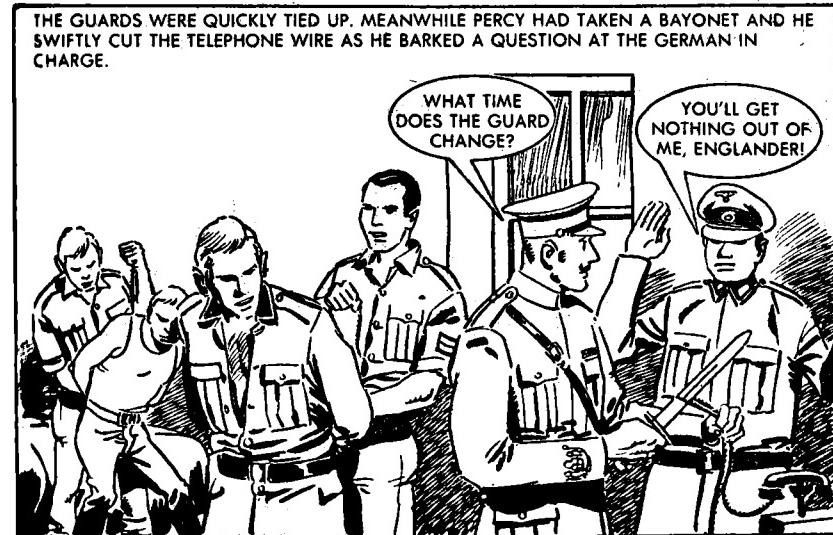
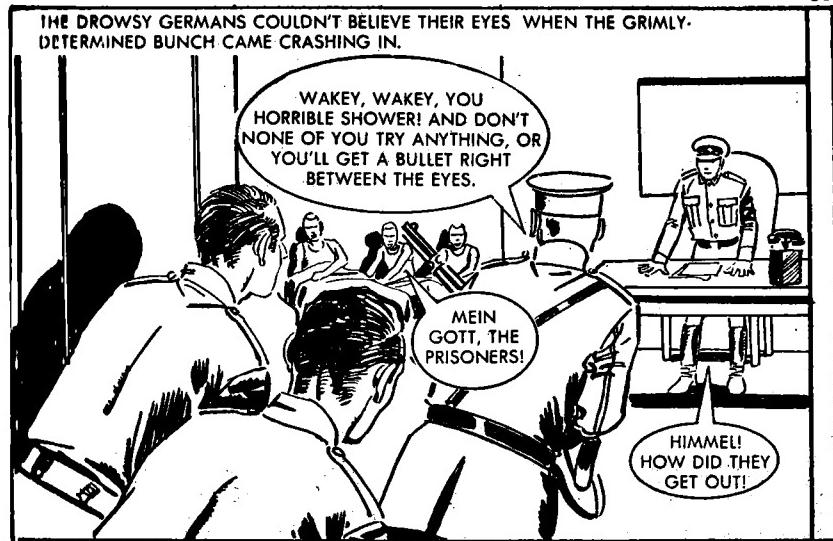


BEFORE THE GERMAN KNEW WHAT WAS
HAPPENING, THEY HAD POUNCED.



SWIFTLY THEY MADE FOR THE GUARDROOM. A QUICK GLANCE SHOWED THE GERMANS
HAD APPARENTLY BEEN LULLED INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY—EXACTLY WHAT
THE R.S.M. HAD HOPED.

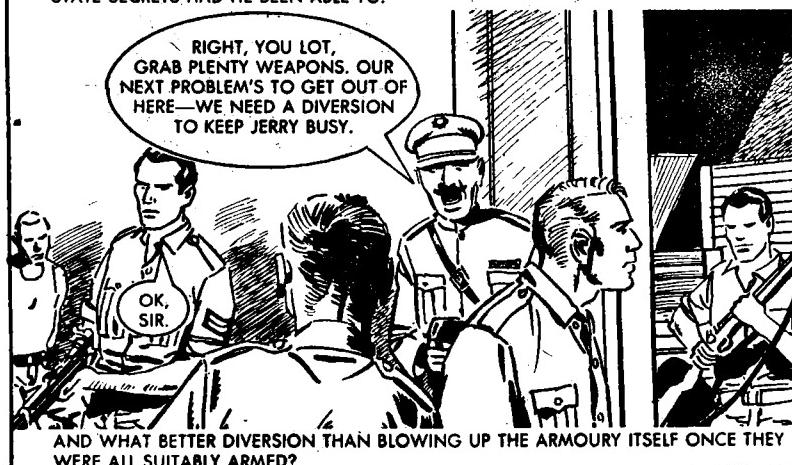




PERCY WASN'T IN THE MOOD TO WASTE TIME. HE HELD THE BAYONET UP AND SPOKE SOFTLY—AND THE GERMAN'S EYES BULGED WITH FEAR.



AFTER THAT, GETTING THE ARMOURY KEY WAS NO PROBLEM. THE GERMAN GUARD COMMANDER WAS SO FRIGHTENED THAT HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN PERCY THE REICH'S STATE SECRETS HAD HE BEEN ABLE TO.



IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO TIME THE EXPLOSION WITH THE RELEASE OF THE FRENCH PRISONERS AS PERCY MADE USE OF THE KEYS TAKEN FROM THE GUARDROOM.



TASTING FREEDOM, THE FRENCHMEN FOUGHT LIKE WILDCATS. THE OUTNUMBERED GERMAN GUARDS HADN'T A CHANCE.



AND MEANWHILE THE BRITISH WERE RACING AWAY. ONLY THE PERIMETER FENCE BARRED THE WAY NOW, AND JACKO HAD THE ANSWER TO THAT.



THE GRENADE DID EXACTLY THAT, AND AS PERCY AND THE OTHERS MADE THEIR ESCAPE, MAJOR VON KLAUSWITZ WAS TRYING TO PREVENT THE REST OF THE PRISONERS FROM JOINING THEM, BUT WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. HIS SECURITY OFFICER WASN'T TOO HAPPY EITHER—



AS THE ESCAPING BRITISH PAUSED TO LOOK BACK, PERCY FELT A GLOW OF SATISFACTION. THERE WAS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO, BUT AT LEAST THEY'D WON THE FIRST ROUND. NEXT TIME HE KNEW THE GERMANS WOULD TAKE HIM MORE SERIOUSLY.

THAT SHOULD
KEEP THEM BUSY FOR
A WHILE. IT'LL TEACH
'EM NOT TO MESS ABOUT WITH
REGIMENTAL SERGEANT-MAJOR
PERCY LANSDALE!

YEAH! ONLY
WHAT DO WE
DO NOW?

WHAT'S THAT
SUPPOSED TO MEAN,
MERCER? WE GET OUT
OF HERE, THAT'S
WHAT WE DO!

EDDIE THOUGHT IT WAS TIME HE VOICED HIS OPINION. HE WAS FREE, SO HE COULD STOP PRETENDING HE WAS A SOLDIER.

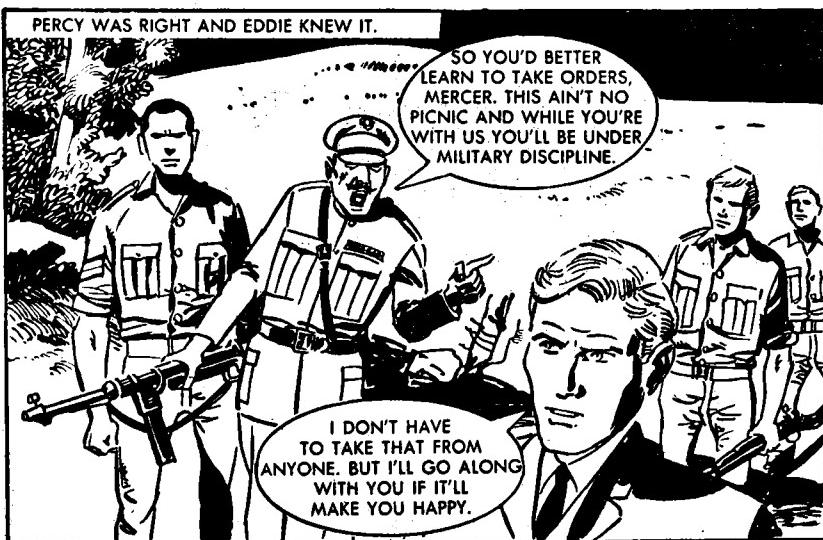
HOW DO WE
GET BACK TO OUR
LINES, MISTER SERGEANT-MAJOR?
BY MORNING, EVERY GERMAN
IN FRANCE WILL BE
LOOKING FOR US!

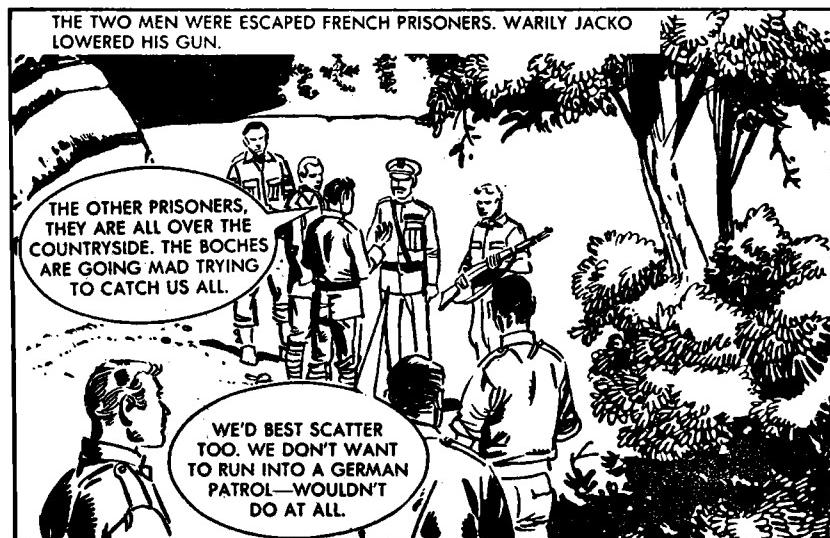
I'VE JUST ABOUT
HAD ENOUGH OF THIS
BLOKE. WE SAVE HIS SKIN
AND ALL HE CAN
DO IS MOAN.

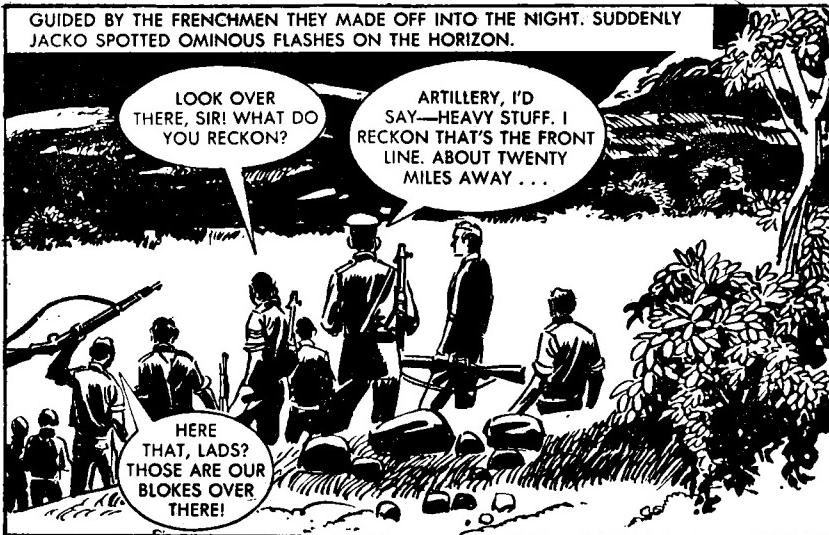
IT WAS THE SECOND TIME THAT PERCY PREVENTED THE TWO MEN FROM COMING TO BLOWS, AND HIS VOICE WAS VERY SARCASTIC.



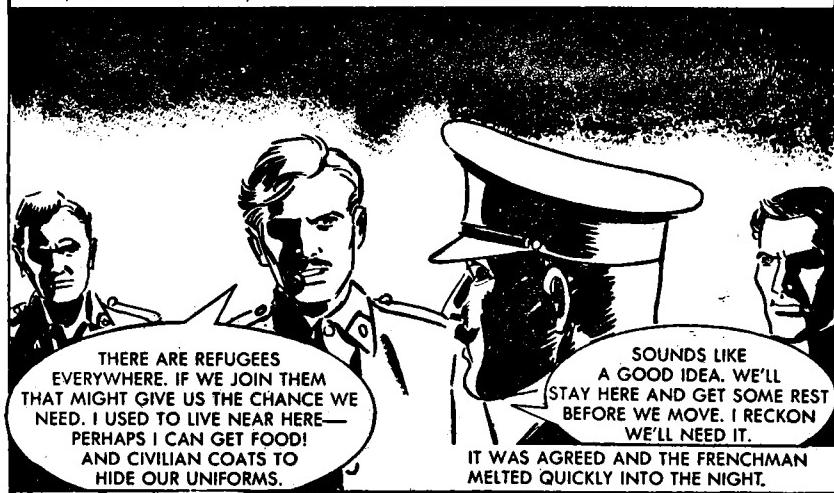
PERCY WAS RIGHT AND EDDIE KNEW IT.



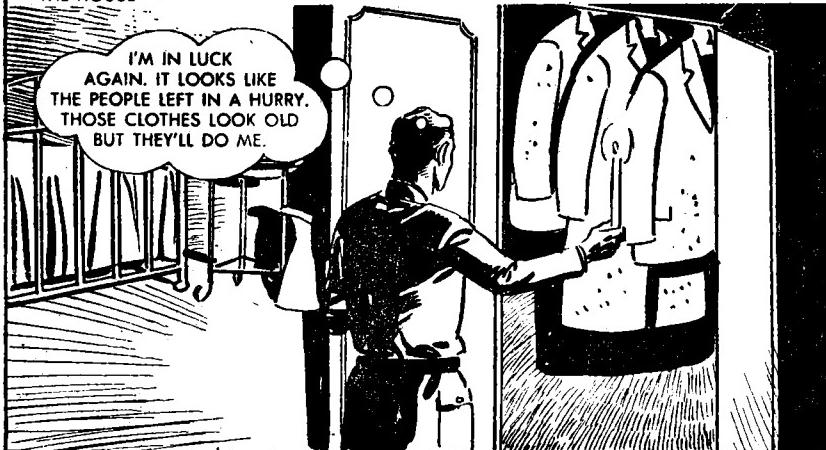




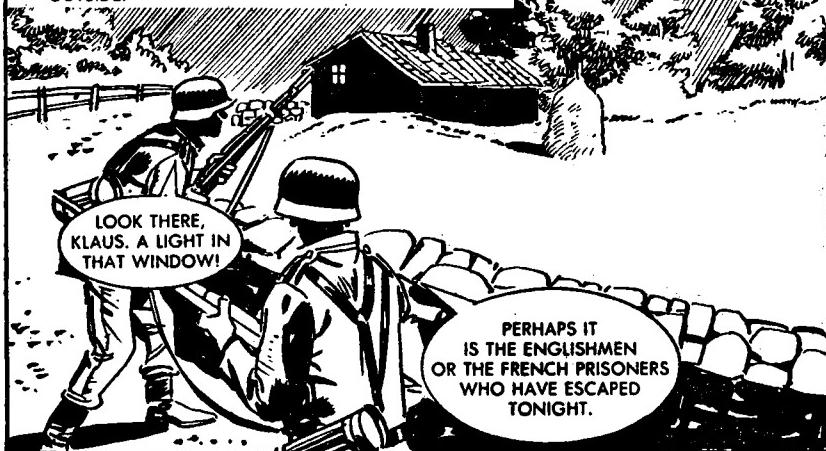
ALL EYES TURNED TO THE FRENCHMAN AS HE EXPLAINED HIS PLAN. IT WAS A SLIM ONE—
BUT, FAILING A MIRACLE, IT WAS THE ONLY ONE THEY HAD.

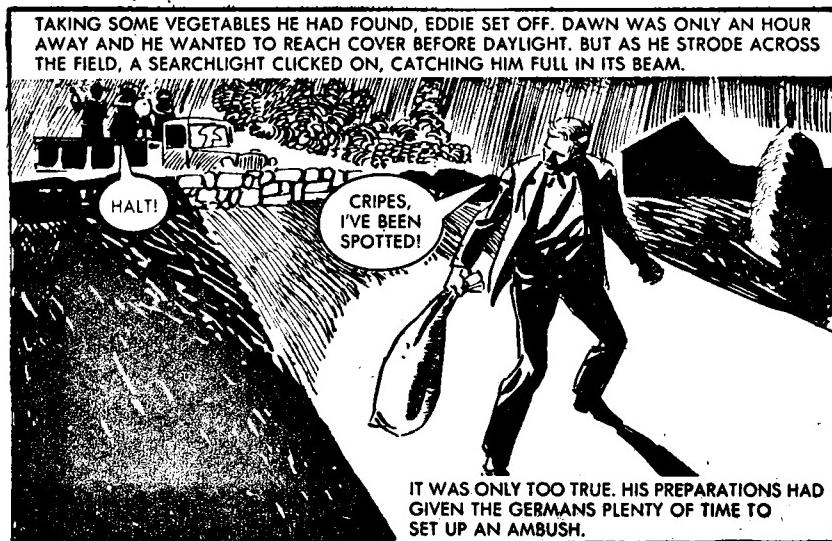


HE FOUND SOME STALE BREAD AND CHEESE—HARDLY A FEAST, BUT IT FILLED A SPACE. HIS NEXT PROBLEM WAS TO DISGUISE HIMSELF, AS HE'D HAD ENOUGH OF THE R.A.F. UNIFORM. BY THE LIGHT OF A FLICKERING CANDLE HE LIT IN THE KITCHEN, HE SEARCHED THE HOUSE—



UNFORTUNATELY EDDIE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW THE FARMHOUSE WAS DESERTED. TWO GERMAN MILITARY POLICEMAN WERE PATROLLING OUTSIDE.





EDDIE PANICKED—HE HAD TO GET AWAY. IF THEY CAUGHT HIM, THIS TIME HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FOOL THEM INTO THINKING HE WAS IN THE R.A.F. AND AS HE RAN, THE FIRST SHOTS CRACKED PAST HIM.

HE'S TRYING
TO GET AWAY!
FIRE!

DON'T
KILL HIM!
HE WILL BE NEEDED
TO ANSWER
QUESTIONS!



FEAR LEANT WINGS TO EDDIE'S FEET. HE WAS SURE THAT HE'D OUTRUN THEM WHEN . . .



. . . HE TUMBLED HEAD OVER HEELS DOWN INTO A SUNKEN ROADWAY.

AS HE STRUGGLED TO SIT UP IN THE ROAD WITH PAIN SHOOTING THROUGH HIS ANKLE, EDDIE KNEW THAT IT WAS ALL OVER.

MY ANKLE!
I MUST HAVE
TWISTED IT!

AND RACING DOWN THE ROAD WAS A VEHICLE WHICH COULD ONLY BE GERMAN.

THE CAR STOPPED AND EDDIE FOUGHT BACK THE PAIN FROM HIS SWOLLEN ANKLE AS HE WAS DRAGGED TO IT, AND HIS BLOOD RAN COLD AS HE SAW THE S.S. CAMP SECURITY OFFICER SMILING GRIMLY AT HIM, HIS VOICE SOFT BUT MENACING.



ANNOYED BY EDDIE'S DEFIAENCE THE S.S. OFFICER LASHED OUT. BUT EDDIE'S EXPRESSION REMAINED THE SAME—A MASK OF FURY DIRECTED AGAINST HIS GERMAN CAPTORS.



HE WAS BUNDLED INTO THE CAR AND DRIVEN AWAY. DAWN HAD BROKEN WHEN THE CAR SLOWED, OBSTRUCTED BY CROWDS OF PEOPLE STREAMING ALONG THE ROAD.



THE S.S. OFFICER REALISED THAT THE LONGER THEY WERE DELAYED, THE GREATER THE CHANCE OF EDDIE'S FRIENDS GETTING AWAY. HE REACTED TRUE TO FORM.



PERCY AND THE OTHERS WERE ALSO CAUGHT UP IN THE FLOOD OF REFUGEES, BUT THEY WERE USING THEM TO COVER THEIR ESCAPE WITH THE HELP OF CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND A WHEEZING OLD TRUCK WHICH THEIR FRENCH COMPANIONS HAD MANAGED TO ACQUIRE FOR THEM.



JACKO COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT THE R.S.M. WAS SERIOUS, NOT AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE EDDIE HAD CAUSED.



AS THE TWO VEHICLES DREW ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER, AN ASSORTMENT OF WEAPONS APPEARED AS IF BY MAGIC.



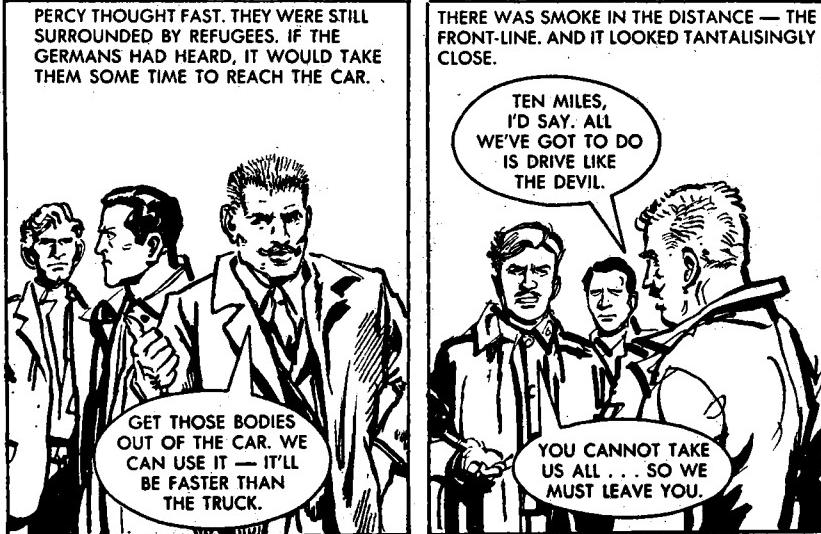
IT WAS ALL OVER IN SECONDS. CAUGHT IN A DEADLY HAIL OF BULLETS, THE GERMANS FELL. EDDIE HAD PRUDENTLY BALED OUT.



THE SKIRMISH OVER, JACKO'S RAGE REACHED BOILING POINT. THE NOISE OF THE SHOOTING MUST HAVE ALERTED THE GERMANS AND THEIR PLAN TO SNEAK AWAY QUIETLY HAD FAILED . . . AND IT WAS ALL MERCER'S FAULT.



PERCY THOUGHT FAST. THEY WERE STILL SURROUNDED BY REFUGEES. IF THE GERMANS HAD HEARD, IT WOULD TAKE THEM SOME TIME TO REACH THE CAR.



PERCY WOULDN'T HEAR OF IT. THEY WOULD ALL MAKE IT — NO ONE WAS GOING TO BE LEFT BEHIND. BUT THE FRENCHMEN WERE ADAMANT.



THEY SAID THEIR FAREWELLS TO THE GALLANT FRENCHMEN THEN ALL PILED INTO THE CAR. IT WAS A TIGHT FIT, BUT PERCY WASN'T GOING TO LEAVE ANYONE ELSE BEHIND.



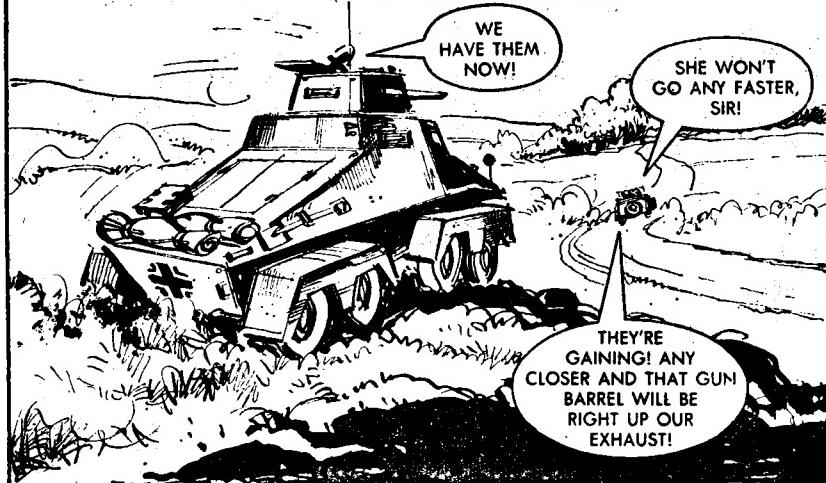
JUST WHEN IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THEY WERE GOING TO MAKE IT, THEY WERE SPOTTED. AS THEY'D FEARED, THE GERMANS HAD BEEN ALERTED BY THE SHOOTING.

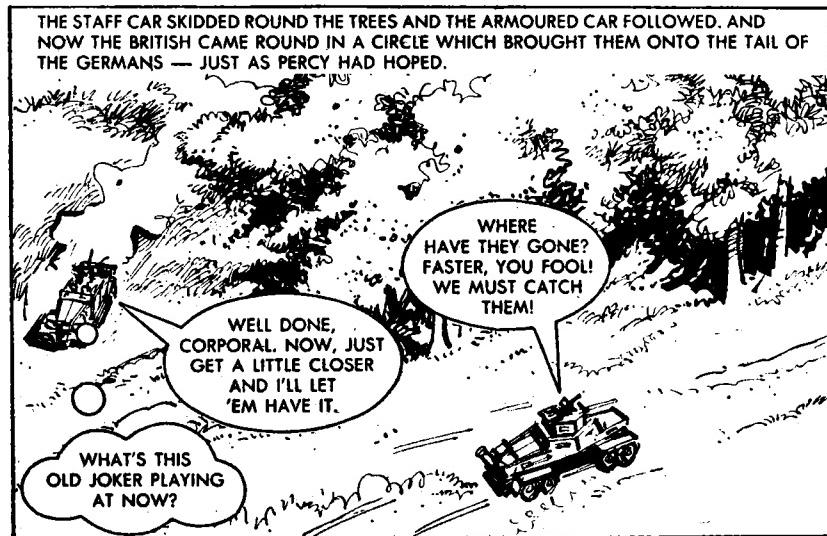


THE GERMAN WHO HAD SPOTTED THEM LEAPED BACK INTO HIS ARMOURED CAR, AND SUDDENLY A SHELL EXPLODED IN FRONT OF THE FUGITIVES.



JACKO PUT HIS FOOT DOWN, BUT WITH THE ADDED WEIGHT THE ENGINE WAS UNABLE TO RESPOND WITH THE EXTRA SPEED THEY NEEDED.







THAT TOOK CARE OF THE ARMoured CAR FOR THE MOMENT, BUT THE GERMANS STILL HAD ONE GREAT ADVANTAGE — THE AIR. ALERTED BY GROUND CONTROL, A GERMAN FIGHTER WAS DIVERTED FROM THE FRONT.



THE FIGHTER TURNED ALMOST LAZILY, THEN SWOOPED DOWN VICIOUSLY TO ATTACK.

OH, NO! A JERRY FIGHTER!
THAT'S ALL WE NEED!

THEY JUST
WON'T GIVE
UP!

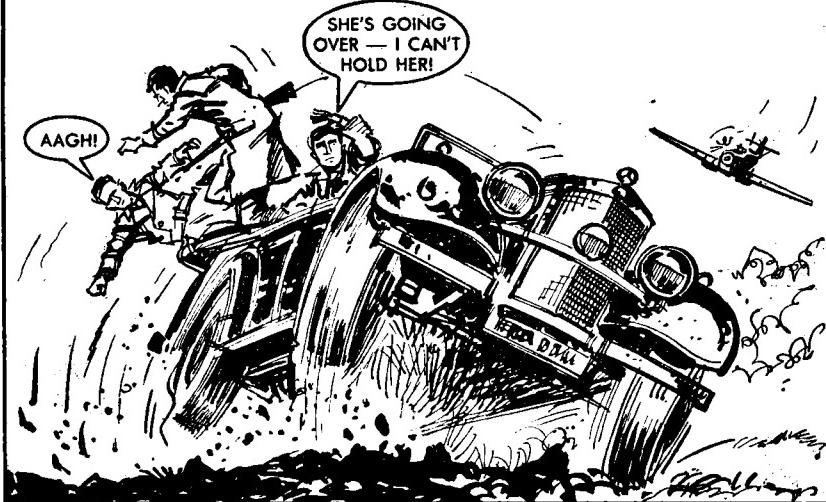
THEY WERE SO CLOSE, BUT NOW, AFTER ALL THEY'D BEEN THROUGH, IT LOOKED AS IF THEY WERE BEATEN.

WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT!

WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOME COVER.

SHUT UP, YOU LOT! WE'RE ALMOST THERE, AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO LET 'EM STOP US NOW!

THEY WERE OUT IN THE OPEN AND IT WAS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE THE CAR WAS HIT. AND THAT TIME SOON CAME AS A BULLET TORE INTO THE REAR TYRE. JACKO FELT THE WHEEL BUCK IN HIS HANDS, THEN —



AS THE FIGHTER TURNED FOR ANOTHER RUN, PERCY BELLOWED. THEY WERE ALMOST THERE — HE COULD SEE BRITISH TANKS IN THE DISTANCE.



EDDIE'S ANKLE HURT, AND IT LOOKED A LONG WAY TO THOSE TREES. HE FELL BEHIND, BUT DAVE FISHER TURNED BACK . . .



BUT EDDIE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING UP. FOR THE R.S.M. HAD SUDDENLY REALISED THAT HE WAS NO LONGER AS YOUNG AS HE THOUGHT. AND IT OCCURRED TO HIM THAT THIS WAS ONE WAR TOO MANY.



PERCY LOOKED BACK AND SAW THAT THE OTHERS HAD REACHED THE TREES. AT LEAST HE KNEW HIS MEN WERE SAFE. VERY DELIBERATELY HE STOPPED AND KNELT DOWN, HIS RIFLE READY.





NEVER BEFORE HAD EDDIE FIRED A GUN IN HIS LIFE, BUT NOW HE LOOSED OFF A WARNING SHOT. THESE BLOKES HAD RISKED THEIR LIVES MORE THAN ONCE TO SAVE HIM. NOW IT WAS TIME HE PAID OFF HIS DEBT. AND DAVE, IT SEEMED, AGREED.



THE ME109 MADE ANOTHER PASS AS EDDIE DASHED OUT, LIMPING. THIS TIME PERCY WAS HIT.



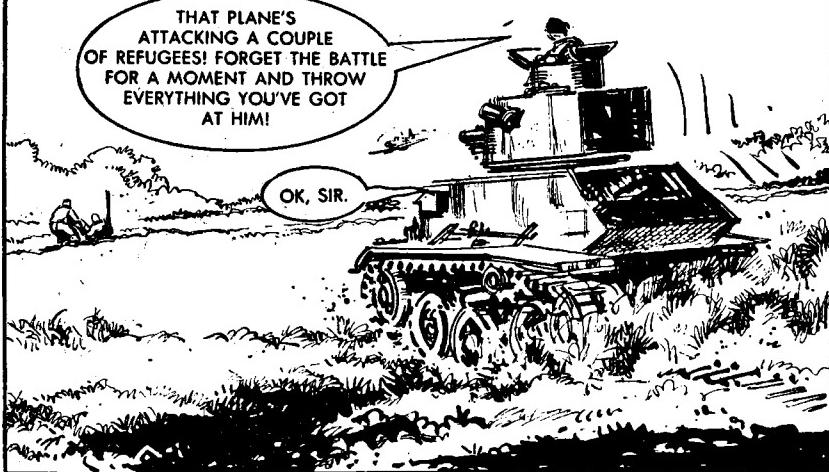
PERCY WAS ALSO CONVINCED THAT EDDIE HAD LOST HIS REASON.



EDDIE WAS RIGHT. THE MESSERSCHMITT WOULD CONCENTRATE ITS ATTENTION ON THEM, GIVING JACKO AND THE OTHERS A CHANCE TO GET AWAY.



BUT HELP WAS AT HAND, IN THE SHAPE OF A BRITISH LIGHT TANK WHICH CRESTED THE RIDGE. AND NOW IT WOULD ALL DEPEND ON THE ACCURACY OF THE BRITISH GUNNER.



THE DIVING Me109 WAS A DIFFICULT TARGET, BUT THE GUNNER KNEW HIS JOB.



THE NAZI PILOT HAD HAD ENOUGH. PERCY AND EDDIE CHEERED AS IT TURNED AWAY FOR GOOD.



THE TWO MEN LIMPED TOWARDS THE TANK, UNABLE TO BELIEVE THEIR LUCK. EDDIE FLUNG AWAY HIS RIFLE.



THEN THE TANK STOPPED AND THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT RAN TOWARDS THEM.



THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EYES AS PERCY STRAIGHTENED UP AND PULLED OFF HIS COAT.



THEY SCROUNGED A LIFT TO THE NEAREST FIELD DRESSING STATION AND JACKO AND ALL THE OTHERS WERE THERE, ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THEM. AND AMID ALL THE CHATTER, EDIE SUDDENLY REALISED HOW MUCH HE'D GROWN TO ADMIRE THE R.S.M. IN THE HECTIC HEAT OF BATTLE.



BUT IT SEEMED EDDIE STILL HAD IDEAS OF HIS OWN. A FEW MONTHS LATER AT AN INFANTRY TRAINING DEPOT SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND, R.S.M. PERCY LANSDALE LOOKED OVER THE LATEST BATCH OF RECRUITS WHO HAD JUST PASSED OUT . . . AND SAW A FAMILIAR FACE. HIS GRUFF VOICE BECAME ALMOST BENEVOLENT—



YES, THEY WOULD DO, HE THOUGHT.
ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE MADE OF
THE SAME STUFF AS EDDIE MERCER!

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Commando